

FIGURE 5A shows a cover 500 capable of being used with one of the accessory slots 112 of housing 110. FIGURE 5B shows cover 500 used with one of the accessory slots 112 of housing 110. Cover 500 includes an elongate member 502 coupled to an edge of a cover panel 504. Elongate member 502 fits into either accessory slot 112, which allows cover panel 504 to fold over the front of handheld computer 100. Cover 500 thus protects display 120 and some or all of user interface devices 130 of handheld computer 100. Cover 500 may be made of one or a combination of plastic, rubber, fabric, leather, or any other suitable material.

Cover 500 may also include two elongate members 502 coupled to two opposite edges of a cover panel 504. Both elongate members 502 fit simultaneously into both accessory slots 112 and hold cover panel 504 across the front of handheld computer 100.

FIGURES 6A-6B show another embodiment of handheld computer 100 having an external port with accessory slot contacts 604 located within one of accessory slots 112. FIGURES 6A-6B show an input/output stylus 600 about to be inserted into accessory slot 112 having accessory slot contacts 604. Input/output stylus 600 includes stylus contacts 602 which electrically connect with accessory slot contacts 604 when input/output stylus 600 is inserted into accessory slot 112. Input/output stylus 600 may be a functional device itself, or may be a connection to other devices such as a printer.

Although stylus 400, cover 500, and input/output stylus 600 are shown in the figures fully inserted into accessory slots 112, these and other accessory devices may be designed to be only partially inserted into accessory slots 112.

The foregoing description of the invention has been presented for purposes of illustration and description. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the invention to the precise forms disclosed. Many modifications and variations will be apparent. It is intended that the scope of the invention be defined by the following claims and their equivalents.

What is claimed is:

2 an external port in communication with the first accessory slot, the external
3 port having at least one external port contact.

1 18. The handheld computer of claim 17, wherein the accessory device is an
2 input/output stylus device having a plurality of contacts which connect to the external
3 port contacts when the input/output stylus device is inserted into the first accessory
4 slot.

1 19. The handheld computer of claim 11, wherein the first and second
2 accessory slots each include a retaining device for retaining accessory devices.

1 20. The handheld computer of claim 19, wherein the retaining device is a
2 notch which mates with a detent on the accessory device.

1 21. A handheld computer, comprising:
2 a housing having a midframe, the midframe forming part of an exterior of the
3 housing, the midframe having a first and second accessory slots associated with a left
4 and right sides of the midframe, respectively, the first and second accessory slots
5 being elongate and capable of receiving and accommodating at least one removable
6 accessory device;
7 a front shell coupled to a front side of the midframe; and
8 a back shell coupled to a back side of the midframe.

1 22. The handheld computer of claim 21, wherein the first and second
2 accessory slots partially enclose the accessory device along substantially a length of
3 the accessory device, and wherein a portion of the accessory device is exposed to an
4 exterior of the handheld computer along substantially the length of the accessory
5 device

1 23. The handheld computer of claim 21, wherein a bottom of the housing
2 is flared out and acts as a stop for accessory devices inserted into the accessory slots.

1 24. The handheld computer of claim 21, wherein the accessory slots are
2 substantially cylindrical.

1 25. The handheld computer of claim 21, wherein the accessory device is a
2 stylus device.

1 26. The handheld computer of claim 21, wherein the accessory device is a
2 cover device.

1 27. The handheld computer of claim 21, further comprising:
2 an external port in communication with the first accessory slot, the external
3 port having at least one external port contact.

1 28. The handheld computer of claim 27, wherein the accessory device is an
2 input/output stylus device having a plurality of contacts which connect to the external
3 port contacts when the input/output stylus device is inserted into the first accessory
4 slot.

1 29. The handheld computer of claim 21, wherein the first and second
2 accessory slots each include a retaining device for retaining accessory devices.

1 30. The handheld computer of claim 29, wherein the retaining device is a
2 notch which mates with a detent on the accessory device.

1 31. A method of manufacturing a handheld computer, comprising:
2 providing a housing capable of substantially enclosing a plurality of
3 components;
4 forming a first elongate accessory slot on a left side of the housing; and
5 forming a second elongate accessory slot on a right side of the housing,
6 wherein the first and second accessory slots are capable of receiving and
7 accommodating at least one removable accessory device.

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1 32. The method of claim 31, wherein the first and second accessory slots
2 partially enclose the accessory device along substantially an entire length of the
3 accessory device, and wherein a portion of the accessory device is exposed to an
4 exterior of the handheld computer along substantially the entire length of the
5 accessory device.

1 33. The method of claim 31, wherein a bottom of the housing is flared out
2 and acts as a stop for accessory devices inserted into the accessory slots.

1 34. The method of claim 31, wherein the accessory slots are substantially
2 cylindrical.

1 35. The method of claim 31, wherein the accessory device is a stylus
2 device.

1 36. The method of claim 31, wherein the accessory device is a cover
2 device.

1 37. The method of claim 31, further comprising:
2 forming an external port in communication with the first accessory slot, the
3 external port having at least one external port contact.

1 38. The method of claim 37, wherein the accessory device is an
2 input/output stylus device having a plurality of contacts which connect to the external
3 port contacts when the input/output stylus device is inserted into the first accessory
4 slot.

1 39. The method of claim 31, wherein the first and second accessory slots
2 each include a retaining device for retaining accessory devices.

1 40. The method of claim 39, wherein the retaining device is a notch which
2 mates with a detent on the accessory device.